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1974
Johannesburg College of Education
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/27503
Boyce, A.N. (1973/1974). What should be the future of colleges of education in South Africa? Symposium: A Journal of Education for Southern Africa, pp. 6-12.

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what should be the future of colleges of education in south africa?

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Teacher education is obviously designed to prepare future teachers to meet the needs of the schools not only of today, but of tomorrow. Speculation about the future of teacher education in this country is, I believe, a profitable exercise; for the more conservative teacher educator, changes in the system challenge traditional practices; for those with a reforming zeal, speculations on the future role of colleges of education serve to stir the imagination.

The relationship between the University of the Witwatersrand and the Johannesburg College of Education has been unique because for over sixty years the two institutions have co-operated in the training of teachers; for many years an average of a third of college-register students pursued a degree course at university for three or four years, and then came to College for the final professional year. This was a combined degree and diploma course — a concurrent course. Other students completed one year at university and then transferred to the primary school courses at College. Until two years ago, an average of 75 graduates, who had taken their degrees independently at university, also spent one year at the College studying for their professional diplomas.

In 1973 about 1 600 students are following professional courses leading to different specializations, both primary and secondary. These students are all in one institution being prepared for one profession. Over the past ten years this College has produced about 400 qualified teachers every year, at least 100 being graduates.

At the Johannesburg College of Education these happy days are ending and we face the future with certain misgivings — it is indeed a bleak prospect.

What are the **factors** which have influenced our colleges in the past and will continue to shape their destinies in the future?

The educational philosophy of provincial education departments and more recently the National Education Council is obviously important.

The needs of the schools which we serve is an important consideration. Stuart Maclure in an article in the **Times Education Supplement** (24.11.72) claims that:

> "the radical changes in the role of the colleges which James put forward came as much from stark arithmetic as from the committee's educational philosophy."

As teacher educators we are inevitably so preoccupied with teaching our disciplines that we frequently lose sight of the statistics relating to the supply and demand of teachers. We should, however, as teacher educators, concern ourselves not only with the ideologies which influence policy makers but also with all kinds of information, much of which is simple economic data which has to be taken into consideration by the administration when planning the future of the colleges.

In Britain the supply of new teachers has increased so that it will soon catch up with the needs of the school; and Mrs. Thatcher's White Paper has indicated that there will be a reduction in the number of training places in colleges. At present there are approximately 117 000 places in British colleges but now entry to colleges is to be reduced to 60 000 within the next two or three years. The result is that some colleges are expected to merge with other institutions, and some will close.

What is the position in South Africa? Is there still a shortage of teachers? In the Transvaal this year all the colleges were given a quota limiting their intake of first year students e.g. at the Johannesburg College of Education we were able to admit only 450 from about 850 applicants. It is extremely difficult to define a teacher shortage; if one considers qualifications and specializations there is definitely a shortage in certain subjects: there is still a serious shortage of men (10% of our first-year intake are men, indeed of the total College population, only 11% are men).

There is also a greater shortage in some

suburbs than in others. English teachers prefer to teach in the Witwatersrand area and Pretoria rather than in rural districts.

Perhaps the most obvious factor to influence the future of colleges has been the **National Education Policy Act** No. 39 of 1967 which in Section 1.A made provision for:

1. the training of secondary teachers at universities only, and
2. the training of primary teachers at college OR a university

> "provided that with effect from a date determined by the Minister, such training shall be provided at a college **and a university in close co-operation with each other".**

The implications of this legislation will be discussed later in this paper; one point, however, must be mentioned immediately and that is the relationship between college and the local university, assuming there is one.

Since the war, the trend in Europe, Great Britain, the USA and Canada, has been for the universities to become involved in the education of teachers in a variety of ways, or to express it in another way, the trend has been towards the inclusion of the colleges within the orbit of the universities. This applies not only to the training of secondary school teachers but also teachers of primary and pre-primary education.

In Britain the publication of the **McNair Report** in 1944 marked the beginning of the establishment of Institutes of Education which became an integral part of the university structure. These institutes have provided the administrative machinery and facilities for co-ordinating curricula and promoting co-operation among colleges in the areas. The colleges were brought into closer working relationships with the universities. The **Robbins Report** of 1963 attached great importance to the strengthening of these links.

> "The universities have discharged their responsibilities to the colleges, not by imposing syllabuses and courses and examinations on colleges but by acting as consultants. Numbers of university staff members serve on Boards of Studies and other committees. A partnership has developed between the parent university and the constituent college from which partnership the colleges have benefited from the experience and expertise of the academic staff of the university. But at the same time they have enjoyed considerable freedom to develop their teaching along lines which seemed the best to meet the needs of their students and the schools."
>
> (Hilliard, F. H. in **Educational Review,** Vol. 21, No. 2, February, 1969)

Some institutes implemented the recommendations of the **Robbins Report** of 1963 and have integrated their institutes and departments more closely in schools of education.

In Sweden there are six Schools of Education attached to the universities of Stockholm, Goteburg, Lund, Uppsala and Umeo. These schools provide courses of training for teachers of all age ranges. There are in addition nine smaller colleges training students for primary schools only.

In the United States there are three types of institutions involved in teacher education:

— **Teachers' colleges,** which offer liberal arts and technical programmes, although they are primarily teacher-preparatory. There are only eight single-purpose teachers' colleges left because of the shift to multi-purpose institutions which is an indication of the general movements towards a more liberal education for all professions.

— **Universities with schools of education,** which are faculties within the university which offer programmes in education leading to degrees.

— **Liberal arts or comprehensive colleges,** which range from small liberal arts colleges with limited education programmes to large colleges.

In the ten provinces of Canada the trend is towards the inclusion of teacher education within the universities. All the major universities have schools or faculties of education which provide initial training for teachers of all age ranges.

One of the benefits of linking colleges with universities is that teacher education is brought into the main stream of the heritage of higher education. The universities have the advantage of more extensive educational resources and offer opportunities for study in depth. The emphasis at a university on inquiry, experiment and discussion is fundamental to the improvements of the quality of the teacher and to the search for solutions to the problems which confront contemporary education. (**COFFE Report** — Commission of the Future of the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia.)

In USA, Sweden, Western Germany and Britain there is a movement towards the integration of all establishments of higher education into a comprehensive system. In Ger-

many the comprehensive universities are called **Gesamthochschulen.** This trend towards multi-purpose institutions of higher education has important implications for teacher education.

Dr. Gordon Miller of the University of London Department of Higher Education in an article published in the "New University" (November, 1969) suggests a flexible course structure in higher education using a credit system which may become acceptable under modern pressures for economy and diversity. Miller's proposal is that courses should be structured far less rigidly and be capable of completion in units. This suggestion fits in with the German proposals that there should be mutual recognition of higher education examinations and degrees by all institutions concerned, and that instruction should be offered in individual study units which may be taken in different parts of the comprehentsive university. There should be freedom of movement between institutions. The Germans consider it desirable for a student to study in more than one institution.

A flexibility of structure is therefore indispensable in the system of the comprehensive university e.g. in the United States there are institutions of higher education which can be freely entered — open-door colleges — and which give qualifications at several stages which can be transferred elsewhere.

One disquieting effect of the **Act of 1967** is that colleges in South Africa may drift away and become isolated from institutions of higher education. I fear that if colleges do not stake a claim to a place in the system of higher education, they may be left stranded or becalmed in the backwaters of the academic world.

Educationists in South Africa have often received inspiration and guidance from developments in overseas countries. Those responsible for teacher education are no exception. It is for this reason that I mention overseas trends.

The recommendations contained in the report of the Lord James committee on teacher education have aroused widespread interest and controversy and have, I believe, significance for the education of teachers in this country. Mrs. Thatcher's White Paper indicates an acceptance by the Government of the recommendations of Lord James' committee.

The recommendations of the **James Report** are based on three proposition:s

1. "No young man or woman should be accepted for training as a teacher until a full course of **higher** education has been completed."
2. "Whatever methods of educating and training teachers may be developed in the future, the time has come to abandon the formal distinctions between the two main types i.e. the three years of concurrent training for non-graduates and one year of consecutive training for graduates."
3. "No teacher can, in a relatively short, or even in an unrealistically long, period at the beginning of his career, be equipped for all the responsibilities he is going to face."

The education and training of teachers will fall into three consecutive stages or cycles. The first cycle will consist of personal education which is defined as a course of study leading to a higher education award, recognized as a qualification for entry into the second cycle. For some teachers, especially those who will be teaching subjects at a higher level, this will consist of a university degree. For others there will be a two-year course leading to a diploma in higher education, an appropriate foundation for those who will teach in primary and middle schools and for non-specialist teachers in secondary schools. These courses will be provided in colleges of education and will cater not only for those who are strongly committed to teaching from the outset but will also be widely acceptable to students who do not wish to become teachers but who may wish to train for other professions. The diploma course in higher education will offer an alternative to the present university courses which are not necessarily suited to the aspirations and aptitudes of those with university entrance qualifications.

The second cycle will consist of two years of professional preparation; "the emphasis", according to the **James Report,** will be "unashamedly specialist and functional". The first year will be spent in a college or department of education pursuing professional studies. The training will be specifically related to a teacher's needs in his first job.

On completion of the first year, students will be recognized as **"registered teachers"** and will spend the second year of the cycle in a school — this will be "school-based training". During this year they will be in salaried employment but with reduced time-tables and with regular release for further study at least one day a week. This year will be a year of probation, during which time teachers will receive the kind of guidance and support which help to make the induction process more effective.

On completion of the second cycle, students will be awarded a general degree of B.A. (Education).

The third cycle will consist of **in-service training.** All teachers will be entitled to release with full pay for in-service education and training for about one term every seven years. Such in-service courses will enable teachers to extend their personal education, develop their professional competence, and improve their understanding of educational principles and techniques.

Both the 3rd cycle and the second year of the 2nd cycle (when students are placed in schools) will depend on a country-wide network of **professional centres.** Colleges and departments of education at universities will undertake not only the task of educating and training students during the 1st and 2nd cycles, but will serve as professional centres providing full-time courses, and becoming centres for curriculum development. The report envisages the establishment of other additional professional centres to cater for highly specialised courses.

What are the effects of the recommendations of the James Committee on English colleges? What significance have they for South African colleges?

Many of the smaller colleges in England are closing down but larger colleges, which are easier to diversify, may be absorbed into the system of higher education, although their academic limitations may make this almost impossible.

Stanley Hewett has pointed out that the

> "closure of some colleges or the under-utilization of all colleges at a time when the provision for higher education needs to be expanded would be a gross waste of expensive capital assets".
>
> ("The Future of the Colleges of Education", **Education for Teaching,** p. 23.)

Ways must be found of using or diverting the resources at present invested in the training of teachers. It is generally accepted in England that colleges of education which survive should have a clearly defined function in higher education. As James Porter, Principal of Berkshire College, has pointed out:

> "If colleges wish to grow and to change this can no longer be done merely on the basis of teacher training . . . Colleges must now have a clearly defined **higher** education function".
>
> ("Beyond Teacher Training", in **Education for Teaching,** Summer, 1972, p. 5.)

W. R. Niblett of the University of London Institute has suggested that colleges will have to become a more integral and flexible part of a coherent system of higher education, and should cease to be identified wholly with training students for one profession.

> "It should be natural for many colleges to have an intake of people who are not going to be teachers or even social workers, but who — after further education — are going into industry, the civil service, the church, transport management, the police force, etc. In other words it will be natural for the colleges — all of them co-educational — to offer, during the first two years, a variety of courses that are socially aware and strong in educative power."
>
> ("The Place of Teacher Education in the Structure of Higher Education" p. 10. **London Educational Review**, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring, 72.)

In the USA, where teacher education is provided in a variety of institutions e.g. teachers' colleges, liberal arts colleges and universities, only a small minority of students train in colleges exclusively for teachers, and even teachers 'colleges no longer train students exclusively for teaching. Most of the institutions are now multi-purpose offering a variety of professional courses.

The education of intending teachers and other students with different professional ambitions on the same campus, that is in association with and not in isolation from one another will offer many benefits. All students should enjoy the experience of a university campus if possible and colleges should not train teachers in isolation.

The provision of a diploma in higher education for all students, not student-teachers only, will take account of the common criticism that students in colleges are sometimes "trapped into teaching" at an early stage before they know their own minds. The diploma course, similar in some respects to the first part of the concurrent course, will ensure that

if students change their minds about wanting to teach, they will be able to leave after two years with a qualification to show for their work.

The status of the diploma in higher education is a vital issue: if it is a qualification that leads to cycle 2 only and the teaching profession, the advantage will be lost, but if it is a transferable qualification which could lead to a degree or professional qualifications other than teaching, a wide range of possibilities opens up. (Hewett, **op cit.**, p. 28.)

The Robbins Committee of 1963 in its inquiry into the provision of higher education in Britain included the colleges. In the years which followed the link between universities and colleges grew stronger, and the "gap between **college** educated or trained teachers and **university** educated or trained teachers had narrowed to such an extent that it was increasingly difficult to justify the existence of a gap at all." (Hewett, **op. cit.**, p. 22.)

Is it possible for colleges in South Africa to participate in the general expansion of higher education without doing violence to their professional commitment?

The fact that colleges today are required to provide for the **personal education** of student-teachers, and not only to give them professional **training,** implies that colleges have a higher education function to perform. Those acquainted with the detailed statement by the National Education Council of the criteria to be satisfied for the recognition of diplomas, will know that students are required to take their main disciplines to first or second year degree level. The criteria for the evaluation of diplomas require that the so-called "academic" subjects reach a standard **comparable** with first or second year university level. What guarantee will there be that these levels have been attained? What methods are there to ensure that all institutions insist on these standards of achievement?

Three possibilities exist:

(a) The approval of syllabuses by the university to which a college is attached.
(b) The accreditation of the teaching staff of colleges.
(c) The external moderation of examinations.

Will the academic limitations of colleges not be exposed once their courses, facilities and qualifications of teaching staff are subjected to the scrutiny of the universities?

Colleges of education in the past have been restricted and restrictive institutions closely controlled by provincial authorities. The emphasis has been on training in teaching skills rather than on personal education. The fragmentation and overcrowded nature of college programmes have been a problem for years and have made in-depth study impossible. As Hewitt has said of English colleges:

> "They contrasted in almost every conceivable way with the autonomous and prestigious universities with their tradition of learning in an atmosphere of free enquiry." (**op. cit.** p. 20)

Will the universities in South Africa ever be prepared to recognize college courses and give students credit towards a degree? It has been suggested as a possible solution to this problem that the main courses taken by students at colleges should be based on UNISA courses. This would enable colleges to equate their academic standards with those of a university, and give students an additional incentive.

If this new perspective in higher education develops in South Africa, arrangements will have to be made for the validation of academic awards of different institutions. In Britain since 1963 the function of controlling academic awards issued by institutions other than universities e.g. polytechnics, has been entrusted to the Council for National Academic Awards (the **CNAA**).

The functions of the CNAA are not to prescribe courses or impose any external assessment, but merely to recognize the quality of the courses of study as meriting an academic award. Perhaps the establishment of a similar body in South Africa would help colleges which are ambitious to raise academic standards. This certainly appears to be the only solution if the universities are unwilling and uninterested in extending their function by making their expertise and experience available to the colleges.

It has been suggested that the teaching profession should be an all-graduate profession. This is the trend in the USA where over the past fifty years teachers' colleges have evolved into universities. In the USA virtually all high school teachers are graduates and about 80 per cent of primary teachers have degrees. Degrees are awarded not only in the arts

and sciences, but in education at bachelor, master and doctoral levels. The quality of these degrees is often questioned; education courses have often been criticised as sloppy, repetitious and lacking content. Indeed, it has been asserted that the autonomous development of teachers' colleges has been at the cost of lowered academic standards.

Lord James, during a symposium at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1972 was asked if he thought all teachers should be graduates. His answer was a definite "No", if this meant making impossible demands on students or if it led to the lowering of academic standards for degrees. He quoted as an example the admirable human qualities of Miss Jones whom one would never wish to force through inappropriate hoops or over unrealistically high academic hurdles.

> "It would be unwise", Lord James said, "to bend the person or bend the degree to meet the requirements of academics who insisted that colleges should be more selective and demand high intellectual standards."

If colleges are to function as part of the system of higher education, then suitably and adequately qualified teaching staff are essential. The criteria whereby such qualifications are evaluated are both academic and professional. Although colleges have at present no formal research function, I would prefer to have on my staff lecturers who were involved in educational research and had publications in educational journals to their credit.

Finding qualified staff for a college is a problem. Posts in colleges of education do attract teachers because of the higher salaries, a better status, the scope for experiment and personal study, the promise of a more liberal college government, and a place in the centres of the country's educational efforts. William Taylor of the Bristol Institute of Education has conducted research into the staffing of colleges and university departments of education.

(Society and the Education of Teachers, Capter 8.)

In spite of these attractions, and what some teachers call "sheltered employment", it is impossible to find adequately qualified staff for almost half of our college posts. The most difficult department to staff is that of Educational Studies, which includes educational psychology.

Should there ever be a closer link or affiliation between colleges and universities in providing training for primary school teachers, the selection of suitably qualified staff may cause serious problems. While universities attach importance to high academic qualifications, including research potential, colleges need to make use for primary school training of people whose initial qualifications and subsequent experience lie in the area of the primary school. These qualifications, and very often there is no degree, are not easily equated with those demanded by a unversity.

Fortunately, in the Transvaal, generous provision is made for teachers who want leave for the purpose of improving their qualifications.

In a series of lectures about three years ago, James Perkins, president of Cornell University, emphasized the three functions of a university as: the advancement of knowledge through teaching, research, and the application of knowledge to the problems of modern society. The last-mentioned may be termed the mission of public service. More recently W. R. Niblett of the University of London Institute of Education asserted that universities are unduly "discipline oriented" in an age when to be "mission oriented" as well is called for. The problems in which they are interested are:

> "by and large the problems generated within the disciplines themselves . . . in the university the specialist and analyst is king".
>
> But Niblett continued, " in society beyond the university, which is mission oriented and anxious to solve the problems of society, which includes the schools, the non-specialist and synthesizer is king".

I emphasize the need for "mission oriented" institutions because I envisage an expanding role for colleges of education. While the field of endeavour is shrinking in one respect, because their contribution to the initial training of teachers is to be confined to primary and pre-primary schools, colleges can and must extend their activities in the field of further and in-service training.

Lord James, during the symposium in Johannesburg in 1972, emphasised the necessity of continuing the professional education of teachers by asserting that:

> "The training of teachers is never complete — at a certain stage it has to be abandoned and a diploma granted to make it respectable."

The continued education of teachers as envisaged in the James report by in-service training during the 3rd cycle is a more realistic policy and likely to be more effective than the brief orientation courses to which we are accustomed. It is doubtful whether teachers can keep abreast of research or subject specialists can refresh their knowledge in orientation courses of limited duration. In-service courses should make it possible for some teachers to branch out into new specialisms; sometimes the needs of the schools in the shortage subjects make it necessary for teachers to have the specialized training which was not provided during the period of initial training. It has been suggested that skills such as librarianship and counselling are best acquired on the basis of experience and not in initial training.

Colleges of education in South Africa must become lively, professional and resource centres to which in-service teachers will come for periods varying from week-ends to a full school term. At these professional centres teachers should be able to:

> "extend their personal education, develop their professional competence and improve their understanding of educational principles and techniques".
>
> **(Times Educational Supplement, 28.1.72.)**

In functioning as professional centres the colleges will help to preserve professional unity among teachers. The present policy in South Africa of separating the training of primary and secondary teachers not only threatens to isolate the colleges, but will divide the profession into first and second class members, the status depending not on professional competence, but on the qualifications held and the place where they were obtained. Stanley Hewett, the secretary of the Association of Teachers' in Colleges and Departments of Education (ATCDE) calls this the first and second class syndrome. Lord James considers South Africa's Education Act of 1967 a disaster which may create a submerged class of primary school teachers. Brian Holmes of the London Institute of Education in an article entitled **The Future of Teacher Education in England and Wales** traces the changes which have taken place over the years in the training of primary and secondary school teachers in Europe, Britain and the USA. In the past there has been a dichotomy between the two systems: whereas secondary school teachers were trained at universities only, and with emphasis on the mastery of academic disciplines, primary teachers used to be trained in normal schools. Today the trend overseas is to break down the dichotomies between the sharply differentiated systems of teacher education and to bring student-teachers who are training for different schools and age ranges, together in the same institutions.

The universities will submit by June this year to the Minister of Education their recommendations on the subject of the role of the universities in the education and training of pre-primary and primary school teachers.

Will this also become the responsibility of the universities? What will happen to the colleges of education? The Act of 1967 makes provision for this training to be given at a college and a university in close co-operation with each other. What will be the nature of the co-operation? It could be informal co-operation or affiliation of colleges to universities.

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